

Pflugerville Mega Center Ribbon Cutting / Press Conference

Monday, Oct. 29

Driver License Talking Points / Potential Q&A

PRIMARY MESSAGE:

The significant increase in the state's population over the last 12 years has resulted in an increase of the number of transactions without a corresponding increase in personnel and technology to meet the demand for these essential services.

On a number of occasions, I (Director McCraw) has pointed out that *"the single most visible sign of dysfunction in state government are the long lines wrapped around our driver license offices throughout the state."*

We are committed to ensuring Texas driver license customers have a quick and efficient visit to the driver license offices, and we will not be satisfied until we can effectively and efficiently meet the current and future needs of our customers.

Thankfully, the **82nd Texas Legislature provided DPS with \$63 million** in funding, which is being used to open **six mega centers**, hire **266 additional employees**, and purchase **equipment and technology** to improve customer service and the efficiency of the state's driver license system.

In addition to the 266 employees hired to staff the mega centers, DLD recently hired 72 employees to allow some offices to offer extended hours (6 mega centers, El Paso, Corpus Christi, and Gessner in Houston).

Effective January, 2012, each region will have at least one driver license office that offers extended hours: Mon. – Thurs. 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and Fri. 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Kris Krueger can provide more details. **(This is also part of the \$63 million funding.)**

POTENTIAL Q&A:

Q: We understand that DPS has not met the deadlines for opening any of the mega centers yet, including this one in Pflugerville, which should have opened in September. What's the reason for all the delays?

A: As we have continued to say, all of the mega centers are on track to open by the **end of January 2013**. The other projections mentioned were original internal targets with the appropriate logistical expectation that there would be a need for flexibility, since building, equipping, staffing and opening each of these new mega centers would be a significant project.

Q: So when can we expect DPS to open the other mega centers?

A: Work is continuing simultaneously at each of the mega centers, which are at various stages of being built or retrofitted, having equipment and furniture installed, testing equipment and technical capabilities, etc.

The opening dates for specific locations will be announced as soon as the facilities are ready to open for business.

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Q: Do you think DPS is doing enough to address the long lines, some as long as 3 and 4 hours, at the driver license offices across the state?

A: As I (Director McCraw) have said on many occasions, *"the single most visible sign of dysfunction in state government are the long lines wrapped around our driver license offices throughout the state."* It will take time to rectify years of inadequate funding and resources, but thanks to our legislative leaders, we are moving forward with positive results and effective solutions. Texans can be assured that DPS is working as hard as it can, as fast as it can, with the available funding and resources provided to the department.

Q: Do you think mega centers will be the solution to all the challenges facing the driver license system?

A: We have already begun to work with lawmakers in advance of the upcoming session, relaying the need for additional resources to further improve the driver license system.

In June, I (Director McCraw) sent a letter to Senator Williams (Chair of the Senate Transportation and Homeland Security Committee), which reflects a request for an additional \$152 million for the 2014-15 biennium to further address funding and resource needs for the driver license system.

We have a good relationship with our legislative leaders, some of who are with us today, and look forward to working with all lawmakers on this important issue.

Q: How much longer will Texans have to wait until our state has a driver license system that is quick, easy and reliable?

A: When you compare where the department was just three years ago, significant progress has already been made to the driver license system by utilizing advanced technology, providing services online, upgrading equipment and offices, improving the driver license call center, etc.

Make no mistake about it, we are proud of DPS employees and the accomplishments we've made thus far. The department will continue to look for technological and innovative solutions that will improve the speed and efficiency of driver license transactions across the state.

Q: Isn't it true that DPS inaccurately portrays the wait times of their customers because you have no way of measuring the amount of time a customer waits until they enter the "queue?"

A: Currently DPS queuing systems at regular driver license offices are only able to measure wait times from the point the customers check in. We recognize that people are waiting before they enter the queue.

Here at the mega centers, we are implementing new technology that immediately enters you into the "queue" when you arrive at the office, via our self check-in kiosks. This feature allows customers to be served much more rapidly and efficiently, and we plan to install the automated queuing systems in the ## larger DL offices in the state. (Per Sam, DLD wants to install, but it's TBD. I'm not sure who else might know this.)

The metrics we do have showed an average decrease in wait times statewide from September 2011 to September 2012 of 26 percent. (From 48:03 minutes to 35:38 minutes.)

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This new queuing system also allows customers to “get in line online.” (Austin north and south driver license offices are the only other DLOs that have kiosks, but customers don’t have the ability to get in line via the internet.)

Additional Texas DL achievements include:

Capacity:

- On track to open all 6 mega centers by the end of January 2013
- Developed a Mobile DL Disaster Support Plan
- Implemented automated driver knowledge testing in all DL offices
- Hired 200 summer interns to process our most common transactions (renewals and replacements)
- Hired nearly 250 new DL examiners to staff DL mega centers

Demand:

- Installed queuing systems in 59 of the busiest DL offices
- Implemented online scheduling for road tests in 59 busiest offices
- Piloted online scheduling for commercial driving tests in two DL offices (on track to expand this to 45 offices by Sept. 2012) **IS THIS DONE YET?** There are currently 41 offices that offer online scheduling for CDL.

Processing Times:

- Accepted credit cards in all locations
- Launched ability to pay compliance fees online
- Increased productivity at more than 90 low-volume offices by routing Call Center calls to these offices
- Established the DLD Leadership Academy to train personnel in problem-solving methods

Service:

- Shortened card delivery time from 45 days to less than 10 days
- Remodeled 38 existing facilities that were ill-suited for public use
- Increased the percentage of customer calls answered and reduced the wait time for call centers calls

I’m not sure if this has been previously addressed, but DPS may be asked how the location for each mega center was chosen.